DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 107 CS 216 060

TITLE	Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum in English, Grades 7-12.
INSTITUTION	National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	10p.; Prepared by the NCTE Committee on Women in the Profession.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Council of Teachers of English Order Department, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1906 (Stock No. 19654: single copies are free; $7 per 100 copies).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Authors; *English Curriculum; English Departments; English Instruction; English Literature; *Females; *Fiction; *Gender Issues; Information Sources; North American Literature; *Secondary Education; *Sex Fairness
IDENTIFIERS	Curriculum Balance; *Womens Literature

ABSTRACT

Noting that women authors are still underrepresented and females are often stereotyped, these guidelines, prepared by the National Council of Teachers of English Committee on Women in the Profession, urge all English Departments to integrate literature by and about women into the curriculum. The guidelines discuss why balancing the curriculum matters and what can be done--offering nine suggestions for action, such as including selections by or about women every quarter of the school year, putting gender balance on the departmental meeting agenda, and inviting a knowledgeable woman writer or critic to speak about women's literature. The guidelines recommend a bibliography on women's literature and several reading selections for information. Also offered is a selected list of recommended books by or about women to help in developing a balanced curriculum for grades 7-12, subdivided into sections on grades 7 and 8, grades 9 and 10, grade 11, and grade 12. A list of short stories, many available in anthologies, is also included. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 461 107

Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum in English, Grades 7-12

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Meyers

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

CS 216 060

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

http://www.ncte.org/idea/position/gender.html

GUIDELINES FOR A GENDER-BALANCED CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH GRADES 7-12

Prepared by the NCTE Committee on Women in the Profession

The NCTE Committee on Women in the Profession urges all English departments to integrate literature by and about women into the curriculum during the 1990s. Despite significant changes in many academic disciplines and in fiction and nonfiction, women authors are still underrepresented and females are often stereotyped.

Why Does Balancing the Curriculum Matter?

Role models in books, as in life, help female and male students shape their own experiences. Balancing the curriculum allows all students to see themselves as doers and thinkers and as persistent and successful.

To balance the curriculum, we need to incorporate literature by and about women into our courses. We need to learn to recognize and appreciate different genres (diaries, letters), different styles (spontaneous, circular), and different tones (intimate, emotional). As we add women's writing to the curriculum, we will enhance our concept of what it is to be human.

What Can Be Done?

First, all teachers must care more about developing a gender-balanced curriculum. We have to discuss this issue at all educational levels.

The following suggestions for balancing the curriculum are discussed more fully by Margaret Anne Zeller Carlson in her article in the October 1989 issue of English Journal, "Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum in *English Journal*, Grades 7-12":

1. Include some selections by or about women every quarter of the school year. Try out a recommended title and discover how it can fit with some familiar theme. Take a play like *A Raisin in the Sun* and highlight it in terms of your own neighborhood, or a story like "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" and connect it to modern considerations of marriages and families.

2. Use books in pairs. Introduce a woman's work beside that of a man' s, perhaps in such clear comparisons as Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.* Build a semester course around such works as John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* and Harriette Arnow's *Dollmaker*, contrasting not only the city-country settings, the family lives, dilemmas, and/or solutions, but also the portrayal of American values developing through the first half of the twentieth century. Or take two straightforward short stories, such as Frank O'Connor's "First Confession" and Jean Stafford's"Bad Characters," for direct comparison contrast. Try two stories such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Winter Dreams" and Alice Munro's "Red Dress," and see how your students compare the experiences of these young people.

3. Experiment with narrative writing. Invite students to write short-short stories and then analyze together the number of male and female central characters and the kinds of behaviors shown. Are there any clear observations that stand out? Do any of them suggest stereotyping that the whole class can consider? A similar idea would be to ask students for titles of their favorite books or films and to analyze them in the same way.

2A

4. Look at the video selections used in English courses. How representative are they? In addition to *Billy Budd, The Great Gatsby*, and *Death of a Salesman*, where women are not included at all or are shown only in tangential or negative roles, include *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, A Doll's House*, and *Three Sovereigns for Sarah*. Or choose to compare a book and a video such as *Catcher in the Rye* and *My Brilliant Career*, both focusing on the quandary of young people growing up with points of view that are different from those held by most of the family and society around them.

5. Put gender balance on the agenda for your departmental meeting and discuss the merits and/or problems of the topic with honesty and openness: invite colleagues to consider questions they might raise if the percentages of gender representation in literature were reversed or if their reading centered primarily on characters of the opposite sex.

6. Involve the principal in your work by sharing these guidelines and other articles you may find. The principal, in many cases, by verbal support alone can influence teachers and departments to consider the importance of possible changes or additions to the curriculum.

7. Form an all-school committee to focus on bringing more works by women into the curriculum.

8. Write for assistance. For example, contact the National Women's Studies Association, University of

Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-1325; The Feminist Press, 311 East 94th Street, New York, NY 10128; your state and federal offices for equal opportunity.

9. Invite a knowledgeable woman writer or critic to speak about women's literature.

10. Persist.

Finding Out More

Real solutions will happen only when all teachers make a serious attempt to balance a curriculum for themselves through discussion with others and through current resource materials:

To Include Us All. Patricia Berry, 1988.

A bibliography available through the Wellesley College Centre for Research on Women (Wellesley, MA 02181), this collection of titles is presented as a base for establishing curriculum integration and library collection development. It reviews prose, poetry, autobiography, and collected anthologies and includes critical studies in women's literature.

Reconstructing American Literature. Paul Lauter. Feminist Press, 1983, 249 pp. $10.95. ISBN 0-935372- 14-5.

Although this book refers chiefly to college courses, it has an enormous number of references and suggestions that would be helpful at the secondary level.

Listening to All Voices: Gender Balancing the School Curriculum. Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child (Summit, NJ), 1986, 40 pp. $3.00.

http://www.ncte.org/idea/position/gender.html

This booklet brings together the papers and talks presented at the Oak Knoll Conference on Gender Integration. Articles by Peggy MacIntosh on "Interactive Phases of Curricula Revision" and Harriet Marcus and Patricia Mahoney on "A High School English Curriculum" offer specific suggestions and thoughtful analyses of many of the implications of gender issues.

In addition to these bibliographies and articles, the following four books deserve special mention as primary sources of material written by women. These anthologies of every genre, of every time period and country, offer as many examples as we could wish of writing that could be shared at the secondary level.

Women and Fiction. Susan Cahill. New American Library, 1975, 379 pp. $4.50. ISBN 0-451-617274.

Images of Women in Literature. Mary Ann Ferguson. Houghton Mifflin, 1986, 606 pp. $19.50. ISBN 0395-36908-8.

The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Norton, 1985, 2,457 pp. $19.95. ISBN 0-393-95391-2.

By Women: An Anthology of Literature. Linda Kirschner and Marcia Folsom. Houghton Mifflin, 1976. 478 pp. $15.95. ISBN 0-396-20500-X.

To paraphrase Adrienne Rich (1979) in her provocative article "Taking Women Students Seriously," teachers of English have two choices: "to lend our weight to the forces that indoctrinate women to passivity, self-deprecation, and a sense of powerlessness," or to look equally to the lives and experiences of both men and women, as we seek to create literary and language opportunities for both genders (240). As Nannerl Keohane (1984) said in a recent address, "We've come a ways, but we've got a ways to go" (30).

Selected List of Recommended Books by or about Women to Help in Developing a Balanced Curriculum, Grades 7-12*

Grades 7 and 8

Little Women Louisa May Alcott

The Cat Ate My Gymsuit Paula Danziger

Stranger with My Face Lois Duncan

Summer of My German Soldier Bette Greene

Up a Road Slowly Irene Hunt

I'll Love You When You're More Like Me M. E. Kerr

Annie John Jamaica Kincaid

Mom, the Wolfman and Me Norma Klein

http://www.ncte.org/idea/position/gender.html

Many Waters Madeleine L'Engle

A Wizard of Earthsea Ursula K. Le Guin

Island of the Blue Dolphins Scott O'Dell

True Grit Charles Portis

The Witch of Blackbird Pond Elizabeth Speare

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry Mildred Taylor

The Other Side of the Mountain E.G. Valens

Dicey's Song

Cynthia Voigt

Grades 9 and 10

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings Maya Angelou

Tiger Eyes Judy Blume

Wedding Days: And Other Stories Kay Boyle

The Mists of Avalon Marion Zimmer Bradley

Wuthering Heights Emily Bronte

Out of Africa Isak Dinesen

Rebecca Daphne du Maurier

*This is not intended as a complete listing but as a useful group of suggestions for schools looking for titles.

Mrs. Mike Benedict and Nancy Freedman

The Revolt of Mother (and Other Stories) Mary Wilkins Freeman

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Ernest J. Gaines

The Miracle Worker William Gibson

Trifles Susan Glaspell

A Raisin in the Sun Lorraine Hansberry

http://www.ncte.org/idea/position/gender.html

Farewell to Manzanar Jeanne and James Houston

The Flame Trees of Thika Elspeth Huxley

Stories ("The Lottery") Shirley Jackson

A White Heron and Other Stories Sarah Orne Jewett

The Story of My Life Helen Keller

The Woman Warrior Maxine Kingston

Breaking Up Norma Klein

To Kill a Mockingbird Harper Lee

Memories of a Catholic Girlhood Mary McCarthy

The Member of the Wedding Carson McCullers

Nectar in a Sieve Kamala Markandaya

Coming of Age in Mississippi Anne Moody

Wide Sargasso Sea Jean Rhys

Tisha Robert Specht

Grade 11

Little Women Louisa May Alcott

The Dollmaker Harriette Arnow

The Clan of the Cave Bear Jean Auel

Jane Eyre Charlotte Bronte

Women and Fiction, Vols. I, II, III Susan Cahill (stories)

My Antonia; The Troll Garden Willa Cather

Life in the Iron-Mills Rebecca Harding Davis

Poetry Emily Dickinson

Short Stories Mary Wilkins Freeman

The Yellow Wallpaper Charlotte Perkins Gilman

http://www.ncte.org/idea/position/gender.html

The Little Foxes Lillian Hellman

A Doll's House Henrik Ibsen

The Bluest Eye/Sula Toni Morrison

Short Stories Flannery O'Connor

Yonnondio Tillie Olsen

The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath

Ceremony Leslie Silko

Uncle Tom's Cabin Harriet Beecher Stowe

Jubilee Margaret Walker

The Wide Net, and Other Stories Eudora Welty

Our Nig Harriet Wilson

Grade 12

Pride and Prejudice Jane Austen

The Good Earth Pearl S. Buck

Silent Spring Rachel Carson

My Mortal Enemy Willa Cather

The Awakening Kate Chopin

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek Annie Dillard

The Mill on the Floss George Eliot

The Lying Days Nadine Gordimer

Their Eyes Were Watching God Nora Zeale Hurston

The Grass is Singing Doris Lessing

Lives of Girls and Women Alice Munro

Women of Brewster Place Gloria Naylor

'Night, Mother Marsha Norman

The Little Disturbances of Man Grace Paley

Stories (Portable Collection of) Dorothy Parker

Collected Stories Katherine Anne Porter

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie Muriel Spark

Collected Stories Jean Stafford

The Mountain Lion Jean Stafford

Kristin Lavransdatter Sigrid Undset

The Color Purple Alice Walker

The House of Mirth Edith Wharton

To the Lighthouse Virginia Woolf

A Room of One's Own Virginia Woolf

Short Stories: Many available in anthologies, cited in "Finding Out More." (C) Cahill, (F) Ferguson, (G) Gilbert, (K) Kirschner.

Ann Beattie "Tuesday Night" (F)

Toni Cade Bambara "My Man Bovanne" (G)

Kate Chopin "Story of an Hour"

Laurie Colvin "Animal Behavior"

Margaret Drabble "The Gifts of War" (C)

Mary Wilkins Freeman "A New England Nun" (K) "The Revolt of Mother" (G) "Old Woman Magoun"

Nadine Gordimer "My First Two Women" (K) "Town and Country Lovers" (G)

Shirley Jackson "The Lottery"

Sarah Orne Jewett "Aunt Cynthy Dallet"

Doris Lessing "An Old Woman and Her Cat" (K)

Katherine Mansfield "The Garden Party" "Her First Ball" (K)

http://www.ncte.org/idea/position/gender.html

Mary McCarthy "A Tin Butterfly" (K)

Carson McCullars "Wunderkind" (G)

Alice Munro "The Red Dress", "Forgiveness in Families"

Tillie Olsen "I Stand Here Ironing" (K)

Joyce Carol Oates "By the North Gate" (K)

Cynthia Ozick "Shawl"

Grace Paley "An Interest in Life" "Samuel" (G)

Dorothy Parker "You Were Perfectly Fine" (G)

Katherine Anne Porter "Rope" (G) "Jilting of Granny Weatherall"

Alice Walker "Everyday Use" (G)

Eudora Welty "A Worn Path"(C)"A Visit of Charity"

Jessamyn West "The Condemned Librarian" (K)

Rebecca West "Indissoluble Matrimony" (G)

Edith Wharton "The Other Two"

Works Cited:

Rich, Adrienne, 1979. "Taking Women Students Seriously." *On Lies, Secrets and Silence.* New York: Norton. 237-45.

Single copies of this statement ate available ftee upon request, and may be copied without permission from NCTE. Multiple copies are available at a bulk rate of U.S. $7 per lO0, prepaid only.Stock#19654.Send request to NCTE Order Department, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1906.